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SIGNS OF INDEPENDENCE IN MOSCOW

ANNCR: VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY DISCUSSES AN INTERESTING ASPECT OF THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY CONGRESS:

VOICE: THE MOST SIGNIFICANT HAPPENING AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH SOVIET PARTY CONGRESS MAY WELL BE THE TREND TOWARD INDEPENDENT THINKING AND SPEAKING BY CERTAIN NON-SOVIET PARTIES. (OPT.) REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE PARTIES ARE TRADITIONALLY INVITED TO THE SOVIET COMMUNIST MEETING AS A GESTURE OF SOLIDARITY AND AN AFFIRMATION OF SOVIET PRIMACY. BUT THIS TIME BOTH THE SOLIDARITY AND THE PRIMACY ARE BEING BROUGHT INTO QUESTION AS NEVER BEFORE. (END OPT.) BOTH THE ROMANIAN AND YUGOSLAV DELEGATES, IN THEIR SPEECHES, REFERRED TO THE DESIRABILITY OF INDEPENDENT ACTION BY NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES. BUT IT WAS THE ITALIAN AND FRENCH PARTIES WHICH SPOKE OUT MOST EMPHATICALLY IN FAVOR OF INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW---AND, IN THE VIEW OF SOME OBSERVERS, DRAMATIZED A WIDENING IDEOLOGICAL RIFT BETWEEN SOVIET AND WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS.

IN HIS SPEECH LAST FRIDAY, ENRICO BERLINGUER --- CHIEF OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY -- REPEATED EARLIER STATEMENTS HE HAS MADE ABOUT THE DETERMINATION OF HIS PARTY TO SEEK ITS GOALS THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MEANS. (OPT.) IT WILL PARTICIPATE IN ITALIAN POLITICAL LIFE, HE SAID, AT A LEVEL OF EQUALITY WITH OTHER "POPULAR AND DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATIONS." (END OPT.) HE SAID THAT THE ITALIAN COMMUNISTS RESERVED THE RIGHT TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS --AN OBVIOUS REPUDIATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST SOLIDARITY UNDER SOVIET LEADERSHIP. HE MENTIONED THE NEED FOR GUARANTEES OF "ALL INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

LIBERTIES"---DENIAL OF WHICH IN THE SOVIET UNION HAS DRAWN RECENT CRITICISM FROM WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS.

SIGNIFICANTLY, THE HEAD OF THE FRENCH PARTY---GEORGES MARCHAIS---DID NOT ATTEND THE CONGRESS. HE INDICATED THAT HE WAS STAYING AWAY IN PROTEST AGAINST TREATMENT OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION. BUT HIS DEPUTY, GASTON PLISSONIER, DELIVERED A SPEECH ON SATURDAY WHICH MUST HAVE MADE UNCOMFORTABLE LISTENING FOR CHAMPIONS OF COMMUNIST ORTHODOXY AND SOVIET LEADERSHIP. HE, TOO, SPOKE OF THE NEED FOR AUTONOMY. THE GOAL OF THE FRENCH PARTY, HE SAID, WILL BE "SOCIALISM IN THE COLORS OF FRANCE," AND THAT GOAL WILL BE SOUGHT IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER KINDS OF POLITICAL PARTIES. HE, TOO, MENTIONED THE NEED FOR "A GUARANTEE OF ALL INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE LIBERTIES."

(OPT.) OBVIOUSLY THE SOVIET PARTY LEADERS ARE KEENLY AWARE OF THIS TREND. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THEY ANTICIPATED IT IN A LONG STATEMENT---PUBLISHED ON THE EVE OF THE CONGRESS ---STRONGLY DEFENDING THE SOVIET RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND IMPLYING CRITICISM OF THE WEST EUROPEAN PARTIES. AND MR. BREZHNEV, IN HIS OPENING SPEECH, REITERATED THE NEED FOR "PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM," THE CODE TERM FOR SOVIET LEADERSHIP. BUT IN GENERAL, THE SOVIET POLICY HAS BEEN TO SIDESTEP OR IGNORE THE STATEMENTS OF THE WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS, EVEN TO THE POINT OF OMITTING THEM FROM OFFICIAL NEWS REPORTS. (END OPT.)

SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT IT IS A MISTAKE TO ATTACH TOO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THESE DEVELOPMENTS; THEY SEE THEM AS REFLECTING MERELY TACTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOSCOW AND THE WEST EUROPEAN PARTIES. THERE ARE THOSE, TOO, WHO ARE SKEPTICAL

ABOUT THE NEWLY-FOUND ALLEGIANCE TO DEMOCRACY WHICH THE WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS ARE PROCLAIMING SO FERVENTLY; IT IS SEEN IN SOME QUARTERS AS A CYNICAL EFFORT TO WIDEN THE POPULAR APPEAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES AND THUS FACILITATE THE ATTAINMENT OF POWER. OTHERS, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT A HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT MAY BE IN THE MAKING---ONE THAT WILL PERMANENTLY AFFECT THE NATURE OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT. WHATEVER ITS ULTIMATE SIGNIFICANCE, THIS TREND TOWARD PRACTICAL AND DOCTRINAL INDEPENDENCE HAS IN FACT PROVED TO BE THE MOST INTERESTING ASPECT OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS. IN THE WORDS OF ONE EYEWITNESS: "THE CONGRESS HAS NOW BECOME A STAGE ON WHICH THE CENTRIFUGAL FORCES OPERATING WITHIN THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT ARE CLEARLY VISIBLE."

PCA/GH